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C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 000998

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PM/PPA AND AF/RSA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2018

TAGS: [DJ](#) [MOPS](#) [PBTS](#) [PHSA](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI: RESPONSE TO PIRACY CONTACT GROUP DEMARCHE

REF: A. STATE 129941

[1](#)B. DJIBOUTI 950

Classified By: Amb. J. Swan for reasons 1.5 (b)(d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On Dec. 13, Ambassador delivered to Djiboutian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Youssouf Ref A demarche on U.S. objectives for the Dec. 16 UNSC Ministerial on Piracy and proposal to form a Contact Group. Youssouf said he had already been informed of the Ministerial by PermRep Roble Olhaye, and welcomed the initiative to give greater impetus to UNSC action on the piracy problem. The USG approach largely tracks with GODJ views, although Youssouf urged greater emphasis on measures to fund and build the capacity of the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to act against the pirates. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Youssouf was pleased that many of the elements of the USG approach closely match proposals in a GODJ policy paper made public by his Ministry on Dec. 6 (scanned and sent to AF/E and AF/RSA). Among the points in common are the emphasis on a "holistic approach" that addresses not only the maritime symptoms but also the land-based root causes of piracy; the need for greater coordination of the multiple international efforts to combat piracy; the importance of tracing and curtailing financial transactions linked to pirates; and the imperative for a robust public diplomacy component to the counter-piracy program. Youssouf welcomed the proposal that interested international actors also address the challenges of illegal fishing and environmental threats offshore Somalia.

[1](#)3. (C) Echoing previous comments he has made on this issue (Ref B), Youssouf said that a lasting solution to the piracy problem must include funding and capacity-building to give the TFG a force to conduct counter-piracy operations on land and in coastal areas. He said that without such "national solutions" the international community is likely to expend significant resources without producing a durable end to the problem. In a similar vein, he expressed general concern that "contact groups" often are little more than excuses for meetings that eat up time and resources but produce little concrete action. He appeared somewhat mollified by assurances that this is not the intent, that we plan rapid senior-level follow-up to the Dec. 16 Ministerial, and that the TFG is also being invited to participate in the group. He also reacted favorably to the information that the Contact Group concept would be endorsed -- at least in general terms -- in the planned UNSCR on piracy.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: As a neighboring country and one whose future development depends on the success of its deepwater port and new container handling facilities, Djibouti is deeply concerned by the problem of piracy and eager to cooperate in international efforts to address the problem.

The GODJ position will likely continue to stress that the long-term solution is to be found in Somalia through efforts to achieve peace and stability and to give the TFG the security capacity to deal on its own with the pirates.

SWAN